

Santa Barbara City Council Subcommittee on  
Homelessness and Community Relations  
Update on *Strategies to Address Community Issues Related to Homelessness in the  
City of Santa Barbara*  
April 28, 2011

The implementation of many of the *Strategies to Address Community Issues Related to Homelessness* is progressing. Below is a summary of the progress to-date for each of the 12 strategies. Now is an opportune time for the Council Subcommittee to direct its focus on the strategies they would like to continue to pursue. In addition, the consideration of citywide meal provision has been discussed.

**BACKGROUND:**

June 17, 2008: City Council established a Council Subcommittee, made up of three Council members (Falcone, Francisco and Schneider), to study a range of issues related to homeless services and neighborhood impacts.

July 2008 to January 2009: Nine subcommittee meetings were held.

February 24, 2009: Council approved the *Strategies to Address Community Issues Related to Homelessness in the City of Santa Barbara (Strategies)*

March 30, 2010: Twelve-month status update presented to Council

November 9, 2010: City Council reconvenes Council Subcommittee, made up of three Council members (Mayor Schneider, Councilmember Francisco and Councilmember White) to review the progress on the implementation of the twelve recommended strategies outlined in *Strategies* and address the issue of meal provisions city-wide and regionally.

The *Strategies* include 12 recommendations organized into three interrelated categories (prevention, intervention, and enforcement) and are intended to be implemented as a package. Each of the 12 recommended strategies and to-date progress made towards their implementation are discussed below.

**PREVENTION:**

***Recommendation:*** Develop a panhandling and alternate giving campaign in collaboration with the Downtown Organization, the Conference and Visitors Bureau, the Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Santa Barbara Lodging and Restaurant Association, homeless service providers, the faith-based community and homeless advocates.

The goals of the Campaign are to 1) educate residents and visitors about the negative cycle of giving to panhandlers, 2) change the behavior of those who give, 3) change the behavior and attitude of those who avoid downtown because of panhandlers, and 4)

redirect the generosity of individuals to fund street outreach that serves very low income people in crisis.

#### Background:

On November 24, 2009, the Redevelopment Agency Board approved a \$75,000 grant to implement the Panhandling Education and Alternative Giving Campaign. The Downtown Organization (D.O.) was the grantee and assumed the leadership and management role with the Campaign. A second phase of the Campaign was briefly discussed as a possibility that, if pursued, could involve some form of streetside donation boxes and additional educational efforts. If pursued, a second phase would require an entity to manage the second phase, a detailed work program and additional funding, possibly from the Redevelopment Agency. No movement has occurred on a second phase.

On April 20, 2010 the Real Change Not Spare Change program was launched. Led by the D.O., the Campaign includes a comprehensive education effort focused on informing the public about the negative cycle of panhandling and promoting the redirection of charitable giving to provide beneficial support for individuals in need. The Campaign encourages the positive intent of those who give by providing a convenient alternative in the form of counter-top donation boxes located in local stores. All funds raised through this program have been directed to street outreach to the homeless in the program area. The alternative giving element of the Campaign is managed by Casa Esperanza and they also lead the street outreach effort.

Implementation of the Campaign has been carried out by a collaboration of public, business, non-profit, and community-based organizations. The Campaign has coordinated messaging and local media advertising to effectively reach residents and tourists that frequent the Downtown, Waterfront and Lower Milpas areas. The initial phase of the campaign has utilized countertop donation boxes placed in local businesses (a mere 23 to date) as an easily accessible alternative to placing cash into the hands of individuals on the street.

#### Status:

The campaign has been in up and running for approximately 10 months. Following are some general statistics regarding the campaign:

- RDA Grant #522 - \$75,000 for the Downtown Organization to manage and run a public campaign aimed at educating the public regarding the negative cycle of panhandling. The grant currently has a balance of approximately \$28,000.
- Approximate number of businesses with donation boxes, posters, countertop signs: 40 (23 with donation boxes).
- Real Change Days: July 21, 2010 - 6 businesses raised \$867. October 20 - 13 businesses raised \$2,510.
- Text Donations (as of 3-3-11): \$80.
- English and Spanish ads and public service announcements have been running in print, online, radio, TV, theatres, and in MTD Busses since May 2010.
- The D.O. has met with SurfMedia to finalize design/art work for a rack card brochure.
- The D.O. will attempt to expand the number of businesses with donation boxes

- The D.O. will be working towards the installation of rack cards on various kiosks in downtown as well as becoming more visible in the hotels (hopefully with assistance from the Conference and Visitors Bureau) as well as the Milpas area.

The Real Change, Not Spare Change alternate giving campaign continues to move forward. Although designed primarily as an educational campaign, the lack of revenue generated and the overall lack of participation by downtown businesses has been disconcerting. Due to the continuing efforts regarding the initial Campaign, a second phase of the Campaign has not been discussed at the staff level.

***Recommendation:*** *Continue looking for opportunities to assist with affordable housing projects, especially those involving permanent supportive housing for homeless individuals.*

The City is assisting four affordable housing projects that include units for permanent supportive housing for homeless persons and is also funding a rental assistance program targeted to the homeless.

1. With financial assistance from the City and its Redevelopment Agency, the City's Housing Authority just completed construction of **Artisan Court** (416–424 East Cota Street), a below market-rate rental housing development comprised of 56 studio units serving a mixed population of special needs individuals, homeless youth aging out of foster care, and low-income downtown workers. The project is now fully occupied.

2. With financial assistance from the City and its Redevelopment Agency, the nonprofit organization, Transition House, has commenced the **Mom's Place** project which is located directly across the street from Artisan Court at 421-425 East Cota Street. The project consists of construction of a new building with eight new rental units and a childcare facility and rehabilitation of an existing building with eight rental units. Transition House is dedicated to assisting homeless families by providing housing, support services, child care, and job training. The Mom's Place project is expected to be completed by spring of 2012.

3. With financial assistance from the City's Redevelopment Agency, the City's Housing Authority has developed plans to build a below market-rate rental housing development at 512 Bath Street (**Bradley Studios** project) with 512 Bath Street 53 studio units (plus one two-bedroom manager's unit) that will serve homeless persons and downtown workers. The Housing Authority submitted an application for low-income housing tax credits in March. If awarded, the project would commence construction before the end of 2011.

4. With financial assistance from the City's Redevelopment Agency, the City's Housing Authority has acquired the property located at 2904 State Street (a former motel) with the intention of master leasing the property to **WillBridge**, a local nonprofit organization that provides housing and supportive services to the homeless. The Housing Authority conducted a series of meetings with local neighbors to create a management plan for WillBridge's operation of the project. The Housing Authority reported on the management plan to the Redevelopment Agency Board on April 26<sup>th</sup> and will execute a master lease with WillBridge shortly. The property consists of seven rooms and a two-bedroom manager's unit.

5. The City has awarded a grant of federal HOME funds to the City's Housing Authority for operation of the **Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program (TBRA)**. Under TBRA, the Housing Authority will provide rental assistance to homeless persons much like the Section 8 Program. Participants in TBRA pay 30% of their income for rent, and TBRA pays the balance. As currently funded, TBRA will provide assistance for approximately 18 persons for a two-year term while they are on the Section 8 waiting list. The City expects to continue to provide future funding for TBRA on an annual basis.

## **INTERVENTION:**

**Recommendation:** *Encourage coordination and cooperation of street outreach teams and the Police Department to work with those on the Top 100 open container offender list.*

City Police and homeless street outreach workers have met intermittently since June 2009 under the coordination of the Santa Barbara County-wide 10-Year Plan to End Chronic Homelessness. They have collaborated on issues such as **camp cleanups**, **release of information** forms for Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) requirements, **emergency parking issues** and **jail discharge planning**. City Police now notify street outreach workers once a 72-hour clean-up notice has been posted, which allows the outreach workers time to work with people involved to offer them shelter/housing and ensure that important documents and possessions are not lost.

Most recently, this group worked to develop a list of the **100 most vulnerable homeless** persons in Santa Barbara in order to focus resources on getting them housed. It is anticipated that this list will be combined with the **Common Ground** vulnerability index list developed in February 2011 by interviewing homeless persons on the street.

**Recommendation:** *If shelter service providers wish to amend conditional use permits to allow for an increase in their year round beds for vulnerable populations (e.g. women with children, elderly, youth aging out of the foster care system, persons with medical conditions and persons on the Top 100 offender list who are ready to get off the street and into recovery), work with them and their neighbors in the amendment process to assess the potential impact on the neighborhood and identify mitigation strategies.*

On March 26, 2009, the Planning Commission approved amendments to Casa Esperanza's Conditional Use Permit to **temporarily increase** the year-round shelter by 40 beds (for a total of 140 beds) from April 1, 2009 through June 30, 2009, to house vulnerable populations. The Commission also allowed Casa Esperanza, with the approval of the Police Chief, the ability to increase the number of beds (up to 10%), when warranted and at the request of the Police, in order to respond to critical weather or public safety needs. Recently, the City's Overnight Accommodation Mitigation funds, which were left over from the Motel Voucher Program, were identified as a source to pay for these **police beds**.

***Recommendation:*** Consider using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Redevelopment Agency funds for capital improvements in the lower Milpas Street area to mitigate the impact of homelessness.

The Community Development and Human Services Committee recommended allocating \$25,000 of the City's Fiscal Year 2011 CDBG funds to construct a six-foot high chain link fence around the bleachers and restrooms at the **Cabrillo Ball Field** to discourage illegal camping, drug activity and loitering. The City's Capital Improvement Program anticipates construction of pedestrian lighting and sidewalk infill on lower Milpas Street in Fiscal Year 2014, following completion of the U.S. Highway 101 improvements. This improvement project is not yet funded, but may be considered as a future Redevelopment Agency project as early as Fiscal Year 2012.

***Recommendation:*** The significant need for additional detox beds is recognized and staff is directed to work with relevant agencies to help them with securing locations and funding for more detox beds and recovery beds for homeless individuals with substance abuse issues.

The Project Recovery Detox Program, operated by the Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (CADA) at Casa Esperanza, has 12 beds for their 14-day residential detox program. Due to demand, since December 1, 2009, both dorms (six beds each) have been used for men; women needing detox are being sent to North County through a collaboration of County Alcohol Drug and Mental Health Services (ADMHS), Casa Esperanza, Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (CADA), Good Samaritan Shelter, and Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE).

A working subcommittee of the South Coast Homeless Advisory Committee spent approximately 15 months researching suitable locations and funding options for a possible opportunity acquisition of property to house Project Recovery. On March 15, the Redevelopment Agency Board approved an **\$865,000 grant to the Housing Authority of the City of Santa Barbara (HACSB) for the purchase of 1020 Placido Avenue**. The HACSB will own the property, Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse will operate Project Recovery, and the County of Santa Barbara will continue to fund the Project Recovery Program. The improved location will continue to provide 12 beds for detox services; however, the new location provides for much more flexibility in the number of men vs. women served.

In addition, CADA applied for and received a City Human Services grant of \$20,000 to support the detox program.

***Recommendation:*** Continue and expand the Restorative Policing Program to work with homeless persons with mental illness.

Although the number of restorative police officers has not expanded since February 2009, Tactical Patrol Force officers are trained in the restorative policing process. In February 2010, the Police Department hosted a **Crisis Intervention Training for Law Enforcement Personnel** for City police officers and surrounding organizations. In May 2011, another four-day *Crisis Intervention Training* will be held in collaboration with

Santa Barbara County Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Services, the Santa Barbara Police Department, and the Santa Maria Police Department.

The officers assigned to the restorative policing unit continue to divide their attention between those persons who have significant mental health/homeless issues and those who have alcoholism/homeless issues. This bifurcated approach has led to successes in assisting the worst chronic inebriates in seeking treatment. Working in cooperation with the City Attorney, District Attorney, Superior Court, County Jail Staff and Defense Attorneys, the officers have begun to better utilize incarceration time to advance detox efforts. Fostering those relationships with the homeless, the officers have arranged for and transported volunteer clients directly to area non-profit treatment centers. The Restorative Unit continues to see success in individualized attention. The greatest success comes from those individuals who have minor to moderate mental health issues and/or drug and alcohol issues.

***Recommendation:*** *Work with service providers to secure funding for relocation funds and emergency hotel vouchers and programs to help reconnect people with their families.*

In June 2009, Council approved a \$45,000 grant to Transition House for a pilot project to fund a **Hotel Voucher Project** (HVP) to provide safe accommodations for homeless families with children who wish to enter Transition House and participate in services but are denied entrance due lack of bed space. At the same time, due to the increased need for shelter, Transition House began a waiting list and offered those on the waiting list case management services and/or referrals as needed. To date, only 8 families have utilized hotel vouchers. Many families were able to find ways to stay off the street thanks to the waiting list. People found that they were often able to stay with a friend or continue on for a few days or more in their apartment because they have a plan—the landlord, the friend, or the family member was more willing to keep them on a little longer knowing that they would soon leave to join Transition House. Only \$5,000 has been expended for hotel vouchers.

## **ENFORCEMENT:**

***Recommendation:*** *Adoption of a City ordinance that is more restrictive on solicitation.*

In August 2009, Council amended SBMC Chapter 9.50 to prohibit "**abusive panhandling**" (e.g., blocking, following, threatening, and/or touching the person being panhandled) entirely within the City, with the provision that the effective date of the ordinance be delayed until the Panhandling Education and Alternative Giving Campaign was established. The amended ordinance also prohibits "**active panhandling**" while on a public bench or other public seating area in the 400-1200 blocks of State Street, lower Milpas Street, or Cabrillo Boulevard between Castillo Street and Milpas Street, and actively panhandling in areas where the person being panhandled is less able to move away, such as while waiting at a bus stop or sitting at an outdoor dining establishment. Passive panhandling (e.g., holding a sign without a verbal request) is allowed under this ordinance. With Redevelopment Agency Board approval of funding in November 2009

to support the Panhandling Education and Alternative Giving Campaign, the aggressive panhandling ordinance went into effect on December 1, 2009.

- *Since that time there have been 13 prosecutable citations issued. One of the cases was dismissed on the eve of trial because the victim/witness changed her story and said that she was never asked for money. In another case, the charge was reduced to an infraction as part of a plea agreement because the defendant had several other more serious charges. Three cases were dismissed on the judge's motion. It is speculated that this was because the DA had other more serious cases pending and it was agreed that the panhandling case would be dismissed as part of a settlement agreement. Information on the remaining 8 cases are not available at this time.*
- *One significant factor is the requirement that victims of aggressive panhandling actively pursue arrest through the Citizens Arrest process. Law enforcement officers are not permitted to arrest solely on observation without active victim participation.*

**Recommendation:** *Continue and expand intergovernmental cooperation to curb negative behavior.*

The Police Department, City Attorney's Office and the courts have coordinated to prosecute **chronic offenders** for violation of the City's open container of alcohol ordinance and other Municipal Code violations, such as aggressive panhandling, as misdemeanors instead of infractions. Similarly, those same violations will be prosecuted as misdemeanors if they occur within certain designated **enforcement areas** of the City.

Through a focused collaboration with SB Courts, the SB Police Department, Public Defender, City Attorney, District Attorney and County Jail, a **Restorative Court Program** was initiated in March 2011. Its goal is to identify those defendants arrested in the City of Santa Barbara who may benefit from sobriety and mental health programs or by reuniting them with family. The first session was held on March 16, 2011. Restorative Court is an entirely voluntary court that diverts individuals charged with transient related crimes (e.g. public drunkenness, possession of open container of alcohol, camping in public, and unauthorized removal of shopping carts) from the traditional arraignment court into a separate restorative justice court that focuses on reintegrating individuals into society. The individuals who participate in this program are initially selected for eligibility by Officer Keld Hove or Deputy Public Defender Jennifer Archer. Once an individual is diverted into Restorative Court, he signs a contract indicating that he is waiving his right to a speedy trial and if he fails to successfully complete the program he will be subject to a court trial on police reports alone.

The Restorative Court team members meet every Wednesday in Department 7 at 10:30 a.m. to create case management plans for the new participants and review the case status of its continuing participants. The Restorative Court team is comprised of Commissioner Pauline Maxwell; Officer Keld Hove; Deputy Public Defender Jennifer Archer; Tona Wakefield, the Jail Outreach Coordinator; Charles McClain, supervisor of the Jail's drug and alcohol treatment program; Norma Beneviedes, County Mental Health; and Isabel Blagborne, outreach worker. At 11:00 a.m. the actual court session

begins and the participants are brought in to discuss their case management plan. A typical case management plan may include getting an individual into the appropriate alcohol treatment center, coordinating release and availability of medication, locating housing, obtaining identification, and assisting the individual in obtaining social security or disability. The Restorative Policing Officer then develops a plan to transport the defendant into the program. Voluntarily completing the agreed upon program permits minor charges or sentences to be reduced or eliminated by the Santa Barbara Superior Court. Initial review is very positive with several chronic violators accepting treatment.

Bringing Our Community Home applied for and received a City Human Services grant to partially support the **Jail Outreach Coordinator**, who is also a member of the Restorative Court team, speaks with homeless inmates in County jail and provides discharge planning services. The County provides office space and access to inmates. The goal is to work with homeless individuals at a time when they may be more likely to enter a recovery program instead of being released back on the street.

***Recommendation:*** *Continue to utilize Police Department deployment strategies to best meet the immediate demands of the community.*

The Tactical Patrol Force (TPF) unit has identified 4 areas of the City that produce the greatest number of calls resulting from homeless related issues. They are; Downtown Corridor, Beachfront, Lower Milpas and Upper Milpas. To effectively manage these areas the Police Department **shifts resources as needed** to meet trends in homeless related crime. Additionally, the TPF unit works with Public Works, County agencies and NGO's to identify and post **illegal campsites** and direct outreach resources into the area. Using Sheriff's Work Alternative Program (SWAP) crews when they become available, the campsites are then scheduled for cleanup.

This **deployment and reporting strategy** has produced significant changes in negative behavior in those areas in a short period. The Tactical Patrol Force officers continue to provide routine enforcement of the downtown corridor, Main Library, the Waterfront area, Milpas Street, and the labor line with heavier penalties in the previously identified enforcement Zones.

In Fiscal Year 2010, a retired part-time patrol officer was hired to **patrol State Street**. That part-time position was funded by the City's Downtown Parking Division and the Downtown Organization. The Downtown Organization indicated that they are no longer able to fund their half of the position.



TPF - Special Response Detail November 14, 2010 - January 15, 2011									
	Detail Totals	November 2010	December 2010	January 2011					
<b>UPPER MILPAS</b>									
Felony Arrests	8	1	6	1					
Misdemeanor Arrests	38	10	21	7					
Misdemeanor Citations	58	14	41	3					
<b>LOWER MILPAS</b>									
Felony Arrests	33	18	12	3					
Misdemeanor Arrests	76	29	42	5					
Misdemeanor Citations	158	77	64	17					
<b>EAST BEACH / LABOR LINE</b>									
Felony Arrests	12	4	4	4					
Misdemeanor Arrests	32	19	12	1					
Misdemeanor Citations	76	30	36	10					
<b>WEST BEACH</b>									
Felony Arrests	4	1	3	0					
Misdemeanor Arrests	35	10	22	3					
Misdemeanor Citations	54	34	17	3					
<b>DOWNTOWN CORRIDOR</b>									
Felony Arrests	21	9	10	2					
Misdemeanor Arrests	119	51	56	12					
Misdemeanor Citations	264	108	117	39					
<b>Monthly Total Combined Felony Arrests</b>									
	78								
<b>Monthly Total Combined Misdemeanor Arrests</b>									
	300								
<b>Monthly Total Combined Misdemeanor Citations</b>									
	610								

**Recommendation:** *Implement principles of a Recovery Zone for the Milpas Area to the extent legally permissible.*

In April 2009, City Police **protested an enhanced liquor license application** for the store at 134 S. Milpas Street, which would have allowed them to sell hard liquor. The applicant eventually withdrew their application. They were told by ABC that they would need to gain the support of the community if they wanted the license upgrade. There have been no further requests for either application or modification of liquor licenses in the Recovery Zone.

Based on the Subcommittee's recommendation, the City Council's Legislative Platform has been revised to express the City's **support for state legislation to allow cities and counties to designate "Alcohol Impacted Areas"** and to impose strict local review and controls on the issuance of new ABC permits within such areas.

The Police Department and the City Attorney's Office have coordinated to prosecute individuals found in possession of an open container of alcohol within the anticipated Recovery Zone for violation of a misdemeanor instead of an infraction.